

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR SHEILA KUEHL

May 26, 2015

Los Angeles County oversees the largest juvenile justice system in the country. The County is currently undertaking several actions that could establish it as a leader in California and in the nation by fundamentally changing the ways in which safety is provided and maintained in its three juvenile halls and thirteen camps, which house approximately 1,200 youth.

The County is building a secure residential setting from the ground up on what was once Camp Kilpatrick. This new model – the LA Model – does not rely on room confinement and is being built without a Special Housing Unit (SHU). Rather, safety is achieved through relationship-building, trauma informed care, positive youth development, small and therapeutic group settings, quality education, properly trained staff, a relational approach to supervision and an integrated group treatment model.

Senate Bill 124 (SB124), introduced by Senator Mark Leno, limits the use of seclusion in juvenile facilities by establishing specific guidelines that authorize solitary confinement only under very limited conditions. SB 124 would provide strict evaluation, use and monitoring protocols, including those that highlight the important role mental

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health assessment and treatment play in the rehabilitation of youth in crisis.

At present, there are few regulations regarding the use of room confinement of youth at the State and County levels despite the fact that the United Nations has repeatedly banned the use of solitary confinement for anyone under the age of 18, especially those with a mental disability. New York City has recently banned the use of solitary confinement for anyone 21 years of age or younger. States such as Arizona, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York and Oklahoma have all banned punitive forms of isolation.

These changes, including adopting and supporting SB 124 with the amendments as proposed by the author, will help to usher in a new era of fundamental reform. These reforms, consistent with the new LA Model, recognize emerging research showing that young people learn nothing from solitary confinement, and in fact its use creates a traumatic experience that may have a profound effect on any chance for rehabilitation.

I, THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors instruct the Interim Chief Executive Officer to prepare a five signature letter in support of SB 124 with the amendments as proposed by the author.

S: SG/SB124 Juvenile Justice Reform Motion – solitary